

ISLAND TIME

Lyrics to songs

1. The Maiden & the Unicorn

Vocal, harp: Paula Lalish

Fiddle: Kristin Smith

Concertina, unicorn: Otto Smith

O once I was a pretty lass
My age was seventeen
My tresses hung down to my ass
My dress was apple green,
My dress was apple green.

O yes I was a lovely thing
So fresh and fair and bonny
The lads all said, "Hey, ring-a-ding ding"
And "Whoa, hey nonny nonny."

They all said, "Sweet thang, let me show
How deeply I adore ya
Those other louts, they'll come and go
But I'll still be here for ya."

But I could tell what oft befell
The girls who play with boys
For when their bellies start to swell
Then they are dropped like toys.

For young men fall in love so quick
Yet are so slow to marry
And Tom will pin the blame on Dick
While Dick will point to Harry.

Yet options for careers were few
In that dark century
A maid could be tamed like a shrew
Or join a nunnery.

Yes, she could choose to serve her man
Or else to serve her God
But either way, she'd slave and pray
Till laid beneath the sod.

And so I gathered up my goods
My blankets thick and warm

And fled to safety in the woods
Where dwelt the Unicorn.

For tales do tell the Unicorn
Is maidenhood's defender
And that is only fitting, for
We are the weaker gender.

I found him 'neath the rowan tree,
I caught him by the eye
Said I, "Here I am, please rescue me
Or I shall surely die."

"What is it," cried the Unicorn,
"With all you hapless maidies?
You are the fourth one since this morn;
You're such a bunch of babies!"

He yelled at me, "Go seek a life!
I've got enough to do
Providing for my foals and wife
Without the likes of you."

I must confess I took it ill
He'd dumped me like a man!
I sat right down and cried my fill
And then I formed a plan.

Back to my father's house I crept
I stole his shining sword
Likewise his wallet, while he slept
And left without a word.

I rode back to the forest dim
And found a quiet glade
And built a house, and settled in
To be a Robber-maid.

And so I thank the Unicorn for
Giving me the prod I needed
To start a business of my own
At which I have succeeded.

So now from men and gods I'm free
Unless I find I need 'em
And other maidens rally unto me

When fleeing for their freedom.

Now some folk live in misery and strife
And some sit on a shelf
But if you want a different sort of life
Go get it for yourself.

2. Watch Your Language

© Paula Lalish & Beth Kollé

Vocal, wire harp: Paula Lalish

Harp, backup vocal: Beth Kollé

Come all you young poets, and heed what I say:
Don't hackney your phrases with threadbare cliché,
But dress up your language and choose words with care;
Don't put on the ones that have seen the most wear.

*You can cry like a baby or work like a dog,
Give dollars to doughnuts or go the whole hog;
But cute as a button or bitter as gall,
If your similes simper, don't use them at all.*

I once was a poet, as famous as any,
For I salted my stanzas with adjectives plenty;
From ruby-red lips to the ocean's wild roar,
I invoked every phrase that I'd heard used before.

My sunsets all shimmered, my rivers all rolled;
Girls never had blond hair, but tresses of gold.
I purpled my prose as I grew in acclaim
And basked in the wealth for which poets are famed.

As the years passed and I scratched my living in ink,
I never gave thought to how low I might sink,
But took pride in my secondhand erudition
Till I died, and applied to Saint Pete for admission.

Saint Pete said to me, as he red-inked his scroll,
"You must pay for the way that you borrowed and stole
And flogged your poor mother tongue, once bright and fair;
Now the Devil can take you for all that I care."

The world is a place full of magic and life,
So why churn out verse you can cut with a knife?
As dense as that fruitcake you got in the mail
(If you soak it in booze you won't notice it's stale).

Your poetic license is up for renewal;
It will be revoked if you prattle and drool
So if poetry beckons, before you begin,
Consider committing *original* sin.

*You can cry like a baby or work like a dog,
Give dollars to doughnuts or go the whole hog;
But cute as a button or bitter as gall,
Though the loser must weep and the winner take all,
And the cookie will crumble while pride takes a fall,
If your similes simper, don't use them at all.*

3. Troubles

Vocal, harp: Paula Lalish

Guitar: Bob Boardman

O there once was a guy named Willy
And he was so very sad
'Cause his car broke down and his girl left town
And the milk in the fridge went bad
Then he bought a winning lottery ticket
And his friends all came to call
He said, "They only like me 'cause I'm rich
But it beats no friends at all."

*O, don't try to drown your sorrows
'Cause they know how to swim
You can lock the doors and windows
But they'll still find their way in
And they're faster than speeding bullets
So it does no good to run
You'll never get away from trouble, but
You still can try to have fun, o fun
You still can try to have fun.*

Nero was a rich and powerful king
With a palace for his home
He was livin' the life 'til late one night
Somebody set fire to Rome
But Nero just played his fiddle
He never sulked or swore
He grabbed marshmallows and Hershey bars
And made himself S'mores.

The dinosaurs thought they had it made
Until that asteroid came
Now their old bones have turned to stone

And it's somebody else's game
And the guys who built the Titanic
Believed it could not sink
Which goes to show you never know
As much as you might think.

One thing we have in common
Whether we are great or small
Is problems that perplex us
And drive us up a wall
Even amoebas in a Petri dish
Wonder what the world's coming to
There's nothing new about troubles
And nobody's picking on you.

4. Fax Waltz

Vocal, harp: Paula Lalish

Guitar: Bob Boardman

Well darlin', you've moved to Chicago
And you left me alone in L.A.
With my grey business suit and my spurs and high boots
Just a cowgirl with an M.B.A.

Well you got a big job with a law firm
With advances and perks and high pay
And you left me alone to time-share on my own
In our condo at Playa del Rey.

*So please fax your love to me, darlin'
For the Federal Express is too slow
My modem is down and I'm stuck in this town
Feelin' lonesome and missin' you so.*

Well we met on the first day of grad school
And for me it was love from the start
So I threw away caution and gave you first option
On filing the deed to my heart

But you wanted a non-binding contract
You said class action suited you fine
I pled "Nolo Contendere," and went on a bender
But I couldn't drink you off my mind.

Well I gave you a ride to the airport
Hopin' you'd give me one last embrace
So I sure took it hard when you slipped me your card

From your pearl-handled attaché case

Well darlin', you stole my love from me
You swindled me, cheated and lied
But I wish you success, I'm sure you'll be the best
Defense lawyer money can buy.

5. Remaindered Blues

Vocal, harp: Paula Lalish

Fiddle: Kristin Smith

Concertina: Otto Smith

Guitar: Bob Boardman

Well, I'm just a humble singer; I sing my humble songs
I've never sold out an arena like Celine Dion
I've never had the kind of fame that comes of having just one name
Like Cher and Jewel do, but I keep on keeping on.

I left my albums at the music store; when they were gone I offered more
I got such a look of pity from the checkout-counter man
He said, "We've already lowered the price; in fact we've done so twice
And we'd appreciate it if you just took 'em off our hands."

*I've got the I've-been-remaindered blues
My talents are ignored by one and all
They say it pays to be persistent
But the results are inconsistent
And I'm trying not to see the writing on the wall.*

I cut a new CD last fall; I gave copies to one and all
I stuffed the stockings of my kith and all my kin
So imagine my dismay when I was shopping the other day
And found my album in the Goodwill music bin.

*I've got the I've-been-remaindered blues
It appears that my career has been a bomb
And what confirmed this sad suspicion
Was when I noticed the inscription
Cause I'd written there, "With love from me to Mom."*

My boyfriend called just the other day, & this is what he had to say:
"Honey, you're the best woman that I ever knew
And without your love so true I don't know what I'd do
But I'm beginning to feel like I need to get away."

He said, "I've been feeling restless and strange
And I think that maybe I need a change

But baby, don't think that I'm leaving you
Cause that's just something I'd never do
I'll come right back in a year or two --
I just wanna meet someone new."

*I've got the I've-been-remaindered blues
My heart's been cast off like a worn-out shoe
He was a jerk and a total slob
And he never stuck to a job
But now he's gone and I want back the devil that I knew.*

*I've got the I've-been-remaindered blues
This world owes me a big apology
Though everybody treats me mean
I'll be gracious as a queen
As soon as I get everything that I've got coming to me.
The minute I finally get what I've got coming to me.
Hope I'm not already getting what I've got coming to me...*

6. Ballad of Jack

Vocal, harp: Paula Lalish

I knew a boy named Jack, and he went to school
And he learned to sit still, and he learned lots and lots of rules
And he learned that his school was the best in the state
Although it had lousy teams and a sky-high dropout rate.

*Be true to your school, and believe it's the best
Though kids beat up on teachers and flunk most every test
Cause if they've got self-esteem, what does it matter
That the student body keeps on getting dumber and fatter?*

Jack went to college, joined the ROTC
Cause the Army promised it would make him be all that he could be
So he learned to shoot missiles, shoot straight and true
At guys wearing turbans and pretty much anything else that moved.

*Be true to your country, if it's the U.S.A.
And not some other one that doesn't follow the American Way
Cause you know you're the best, and you know you're right
And if anyone tells you different, go ahead and pick a fight.*

Jack became a spaceman, and he flew to Mars
And looked for evidence of life, like karaoke bars
But he didn't find it, so he came back down
He said, "They've got everything I need at the Sprawl-Mart in my home town."

*Be true to your planet; you know it's number one
Because it's gotta whole lotta water and oxygen
And furthermore, it's got the human race
All the rest is just dust floating in empty space.*

*So follow Jack's example; do what you're told to do
And think what you're told by people who must be smarter than you
Cause they got elected, and they got the facts
And they know what's best for you, though they may not know Jack.*

7. Voyage South

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Vocal: Paula Lalish

Harp, backup vocal, percussion: Beth Kollé

Harp: Michael MacBean

December is coming on slow
The dark days are taking their toll (oh de oh)
The full-spectrum lights I installed
Don't keep me from climbing the walls

*And I'm dreaming of a voyage south
Wanna turn my pockets inside out
Take every penny I've saved
And then I'd wave
Goodbye to all of my friends at home
Who go to work and cuss and moan
Pay for the lights and the telephone
And try to make the kids behave*

The world is a circle of blue
Depending on your point of view (oh de oo)
But the longer I sit here and stay
The more it's a circle of gray

*And I really need a voyage south
Clean the taste of ashes from my mouth
Throw my winter coat away
And learn to play
What I long for more than anything
Is to hear the whales sing
My heart's stretched like a string
And pulling tighter every day*

I wish I may and wish I might
Go where the air's balmy and bright (oh delight)
And if all my wishes come true

The one that I'll go with is you

*And we're going on a voyage south
Trust in me cause I have no doubt
Toss out your Prozac
And don't look back
And we'll eat and drink only native things
Rum and coke and onion rings
Make new friends who have fins and wings
It's time we cut ourselves some slack
Somewhere off the beaten track
In a little island shack
Sure would beat sitting on a tack
Or a monkey on your back
Or a major heart attack
Or your toenails turning black
(And my husband's name is Jack)
And we sure would like a snack...*

8. Hunters & Gatherers

Vocal, harp: Paula Lalish

In primitive days, when cavemen abounded
They took bows and arrows, and hunted for meat
'Round the fire they would sit, and they'd belch and they'd spit
Their manners left cave women feeling astounded.

Now Neanderthal ladies made dresses and babies
And painted the walls with artistic designs
And filled pots with flowers, and whiled away hours
Doing things the men thought were a big waste of time.

*Hunters & gatherers, hunters & gatherers
Once long ago man was lonely as sin
Hunters & gatherers, hunters & gatherers
Till he hunted a woman, who gathered him in.*

Now nature is clever and nature is keen
When it comes to the mode of transmission of genes
Flowers & trees spread their pollen by bees
While the bees leave the egg-laying up to their Queen.

And amoebas and earthworms, when they reproduce
Have no need to flirt and no need to seduce
When they go to tango it only takes one
(Though you may say that way they miss most of the fun).

*Hunters & gatherers, hunters & gatherers,
She's got X chromosomes, he's got the Y
Hunters & gatherers, hunters & gatherers,
Is it any surprise they don't see eye to eye?*

Now nothing's more sure in this uncertain world
Than that girls will chase guys and that guys will chase girls
It isn't their fault they behave in this way
The code is embedded in their DNA.

But while he's thinking having a fling might be nice
She's dreaming of bridesmaids and diamonds and rice
Still, when they tie the knot it's forever, of course –
Except for the cases that end in divorce.

*Hunters & gatherers, hunters & gatherers
Each is as different as day is from night
Hunters & gatherers, hunters & gatherers
After 3 million years they still can't get it right.*

Now Sundays when there's a big game on the tube
He hunts through the kitchen for six-packs and food
Chee-tos and jerky (but hold the tofurkey)
And he belches and spits with his circle of dudes.

And when she's feeling bored or when she's got the blues
She gathers her keys and goes shopping for shoes
Just heating up that Visa card makes life seem not quite so hard
Though she owns several pairs that she still hasn't used.

*Hunters & gatherers, hunters & gatherers
Both co-dependent, the gods' cruel jest
Hunters & gatherers, hunters & gatherers,
You can't live without 'em, so give it your best.*

*Hunters & gatherers, hunters & gatherers
Once long ago man was lonely as sin
Hunters & gatherers, hunters & gatherers
Till he hunted a woman, who gathered him in.*

9. Island Time

Marrowstone National Tabernacle Choir:

Paula Lalish, John Malcomson, Cheryl Brunette, Greg Lalish

Marrowstone National Philharmonic Orchestra:

Harp: Paula Lalish

Guitar: John Matthiesen

Percussion: Owen Mulkey
In the upper left corner of the U.S.A.
There's a tiny island where the people say
"Nice to meet you, now please go away
And leave us on island time."

The living is easy, the water is sweet
You can swim without clothes, but don't cut your feet.
If you want conversation, you just stop in the street
Cause you're living on island time.

*Pretty little island in the fog and rain
Pretty little island in the sun again
Pretty little island floating all alone
That's my home, my Marrowstone.*

Some folk say the place is not quite real
The clocks work backward, water runs uphill
And the older you get there, the younger you feel
When you're living on island time.

You can get there by car, you just follow the ridge
It's not too far once you cross the bridge
Go in through the kitchen and you raid the fridge
And you're back on island time.

*Every January on New Year's Day
The people gather down at Mystery Bay
They jump in the water then they jump back out
Grab a latté and begin to shout*

It's not on the map, it's kinda hard to find
In fact it's mostly just a state of mind
Cause you leave the 21st century behind
When you're living on island time.

10. Geezer Love Song

Vocal, harp: Paula Lalish
Many million years ago, give or take a few
Before I needed bifocals to look out at the view
I was looking all around, and what I saw was you
What I saw was you.

Now many million years have passed; we're in the present tense
We've got some kids, a fixed-rate mortgage, and a picket fence
Who could have predicted this turning of events?

*Oh my geezer love, my long-time darling geezer dear
Put your hearing aid back in and come sit very near
While I sing my love song to you, darling geezer dear
Darling geezer dear.*

Our bodies are like Camembert; they soften and they spread
My knees are weak, your back is tweaked, our feet are filled with lead
And memories leak daily from the holes in both our heads.

We carry home prescriptions from the drugstore by the pound
Orthotics help us keep our feet both firmly on the ground
And Geritol and Metamucil make our world go round.

The years go on piling up like bills on a desk
And after all that we've been through, the worst and the best
We still get stuck in feelings we don't know how to express.

But when the lights go out and it's a dark night of the soul
And I obsess about the things that I cannot control
And all the answers I don't have and prob'ly never will
You're here with me still --

For all the times I point your faults out till my face is blue
You never change; you counter-claim that I have failings too
But even if your teeth are false, I know your love is true.

11. Menopausal Mama

Vocal, harp: Paula Lalish

O I'm a menopausal mama
And though you well may scoff
My kids are grown and my time's my own
And my credit card's paid off, paid off
My credit card's paid off.

When I was in my natural prime
The boys gave me no peace
They dogged my footsteps every time
That I walked down the street

Now I no longer turn their heads
I am old beyond belief
To them I might as well be dead –
And it's such a sweet relief!

I don't have to dress in skimpy clothes

Exposed to every breeze
Or worry over birth control
Or contracting STD's

I don't have to hold my stomach in
I don't have to shave my legs
Or take offense at brash young men
Who hang out their tongues and beg

Fair maids, who fear that growing old
Is a fate both cursed and cruel
Take heart, for I've been there and I
Don't envy girls like you

So here's to hair that's turning gray,
To all my aches and wrinkles
And for the gift of living every day
I thank each star that twinkles.

So I'm a menopausal mama
You may go ahead and scoff
But my kids are grown and my time's my own
And my credit card's paid off.